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the Khevsurs.[29] In order to stop the fighting men from bloodshed the Khevsur women kneel between them, and with the words "Lords! Heroes!, so we ask you!" they throw their *mandili* on the ground before the feet of the men, who immediately cease the brawl. Many investigators regard this custom as a survival of the formerly-existing matriarchate among the Khevsurs. All attempts to find out from the Khevsurs the meaning of this custom are futile.[30] On the question as to why they are obliged to do this, "the Khevsurs can not answer or give any explanation."

Not only in customs, but even in the current expressions of the Georgian language, preference is given to woman before man. When speaking about a male and female together, the Georgian gives the female the first place always. For example, one says "mother and father" (*ded-mama*)—from the words, *deda* (mother) and *mama* (father)—but one never says "father and mother." The Georgian says *da-dzma* (*da*—sister; *dzma*—brother), but not "brother and sister"; also, female and male (*kal—vaji; kali*, female; *vaji*, male), but not "male and female"; wife and husband (*tsol-kmari—tsoli*—wife; *kmari*—husband), but never "husband and wife."

In every-day speech, in poetry, in music and song, and even in dancing, the Georgian glorifies the beauty and attributes of the feminine sex. In every gathering, on all occasions, during work or idleness, in all corners of the country, even in the secluded glacier regions, the Georgians sing; and among their songs of warfare and courage there are always the songs of passionate love and the praise of woman's beauty. The woman, on the other hand, attained her esteemed position not only by her beauty, but also by her personal qualities which often gave her the leading role in the destiny of the nation and the country. The personality of the brilliant Queen Tamar of the Georgians may be mentioned as an example. She was called by her people the "King," "King Tamar"—*Tamar-mepe* (*mepe*—king), for her great achievements and personal abilities. The time of her reign (1184-1212) represents the golden age of Georgian history. In every corner

[29] Eristov: 127.
[30] Gurko-Kriajin: 272.

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of Georgia, among every ethnic group—in the secluded glacier regions of the rough Highlanders as well as among the easy-going and cultured Lowlanders—the people sing national songs praising "King" Thamar—(*Thamar-mepe*) and her glory, which was the glory of Georgia. For example, D. W. Freshfield[21] relates of his Svan guides that they "chanted a ballad with a refrain of 'Thamara, Thamara,' in honour of their queen." And in the person of every Georgian mother, the country had its most zealous defenders of its sovereignty, its language and culture.

[21] Freshfield: II, 12.